

In Preparation for Your Next Biennial Review

Within the preceding 24 calendar months, the Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) 61.56 states we must do one hour of ground review and one hour of flight as a minimum during a flight review with a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI). We must review FAR Part 91 where appropriate and any maneuvers or procedures at the discretion of the individual giving the flight review.

With this broad definition, local CFIs focus on various skills while guiding a pilot through a biennial flight review (BFI). Every CFI has his or her own “pet peeve”.

Dave Ross can always tell if a pilot is not using the rudder on takeoff. Dave discloses, “If a pilot dips the right wing just after liftoff, that tells me not enough right rudder was used to offset P-factor from the prop rotation.” Mr. Ross proposes, “In preparation for a BFI, I suggest studying basic aerodynamics and the why’s and how’s of flight controls.”

Todd Mather finds that emergency skills for forced landings or in-flight emergencies like fire or smoke in the cabin tend to become rusty. Todd declares, “I like to ensure that we have sharpened those skills and safely performed and discussed these items.”

Sandy Gordley also finds emergency procedures, both on field and off field, to be skills in which pilots are most often out of practice. Sandy says, “We review the published procedures as part of the ground review and then put that to practical use in the air. Practicing power-off descents and go-arounds are a great way to brush up on maneuvering skills. For some of them, that means getting out the checklist and re-acquainting themselves with it.”

According to Nick Burch, most notably deficient are operations in IMC/IFR conditions. Nick states, “Get with your instructor and work out a review plan that fits you for the type of flying you usually do.” He adds, “Remember it is a review, not a checkride. Make it an interactive experience with your instructor to maximize the learning potential.”

In preparation for your next flight review, Todd Mather suggests, “When you schedule your flight, ask the individual [CFI] what they intend to do and what FAR’s will be discussed. I personally like to keep it more on an informal level so we can maximize our time. In addition to the more immediate in-flight type of considerations, I like to discuss Part 91 and Part 43, not to test memorization, but to ensure we know where to find requirements throughout the [regulations].”

Sandy Gordley recommends, “Review your check list and be familiar with it. Be sure to wear your glasses if your medical states you need to. Wear comfortable clothing and be on time.”

Todd Mather advises, “Realize that our Chapter has members with experience from student through retired pilots and maintenance individuals of all kinds. Take advantage of this knowledge. If you have a question about something, don’t hesitate to ask. I haven’t heard of a bad question and I think you can rely on our membership to feel the same.”

Now we all have a new activity in which to participate while sitting at the local airport. Not only shall we continue to observe and critique the landings of fellow pilots, we can now scrutinize their take-offs, too, waiting for that right wing to dip!

Thank you to our local CFIs for their help with this article.